

What is the Ombudsman Program?

The Ombudsman Program helps to ensure quality resident care in nursing facilities, assisted living centers, and residential living centers. The Ombudsman is an advocate whose goal is to promote the highest quality of life for residents by serving as a communication bridge between the resident and the facility.



The Ombudsman Program is a nationwide program administered in South Dakota by the Department of Social Services (DSS) Division of Adult Services and Aging. The role of the Ombudsman includes the following:

- **Advocate** – The Ombudsman works on behalf of residents and may negotiate with facility staff, file complaints, or work with the nursing facility's resident council.
- **Educator** – The Ombudsman works to educate residents, families, friends, or potential consumers about their rights and responsibilities in a facility. Brochures and other information are available to inform the public on their rights.
- **Investigator** – The Ombudsman investigates complaints and grievances to insure that they are resolved fairly.
- **Mediator** – The Ombudsman may serve as an impartial mediator between the resident and staff, other residents, or family members. The Ombudsman may be a spokesperson for the resident, communicating concerns to appropriate staff or family members until that concern is resolved.

What services does the Ombudsman provide?

- Distributes resident rights literature.
- Distributes posters in the facility explaining resident rights.
- Conducts resident rights in-service training to facility staff.
- Provides technical assistance to families seeking to place a relative.
- Provides general information to the community regarding resources for long-term care, resident rights, choosing a facility, Medicaid, Medicare, and the Ombudsman Program.

Who can use the Ombudsman Program?

- Residents of nursing facilities, assisted living centers, and residential living centers.
- Friends and relatives of residents in facilities.
- Facility staff.
- Public agencies.
- Senior citizen groups.
- Any person or group interested in the well-being of facility residents.

Anyone who believes that conditions in a facility may violate a resident's rights under state or federal law, rules or regulations may request the services of the Ombudsman Program.

Frequent visits are the best way to insure that residents are receiving quality care. Residents are more likely to share their real feelings and concerns with someone they know well.

What if there is a concern or complaint?

When a concern arises, visit with facility staff (administrator, director of nursing, social services) to attempt to resolve the concern. If the concern is not resolved to the satisfaction of the resident, contact the Ombudsman Program for assistance.

Facilities are required to display an Ombudsman poster with the phone numbers of the state and local Ombudsman.

What happens after a complaint has been filed?

An Ombudsman will respond promptly and investigate the complaint. If a complaint is substantiated, the Ombudsman will work to resolve the complaint with the facility.

The Ombudsman Program also works with the Department of Health's Licensure and Certification and the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit to investigate and resolve identified problems. The name of an individual filing a complaint can be kept confidential. But in some instances, better results may be obtained if the complainant is identified.



For more information or to file a complaint, contact your local DSS Adult Services and Aging office. (See listing on back.)

Department of Social Services Adult Services and Aging Offices

Aberdeen: (605) 626-3145
422 S. Washington
PO Box 1300, 57402

Belle Fourche: (605) 892-2731
609 5th Ave., 57717

Brookings: (605) 688-4330
1310 Main Ave. S., Suite 101,
57006

Chamberlain: (605) 734-4500
810 N. Main, PO Box 430, 57325

Deadwood: (605) 578-2402
20 Cliff St., PO Box 607, 57732

Hot Springs: (605) 745-5100
2500 Minnekahta Ave., Bldg. 1,
PO Box 729, 57747

Huron: (605) 353-7112
110 3rd St. SW, Suite 200,
PO Box 1408, 57350

Lake Andes: (605) 487-7607
3rd & Lake, PO Box 190, 57356

Madison: (605) 256-5683
223 S. Van Eps Ave., Suite 201,
57042

Martin: (605) 685-6521
404 Third Ave., PO Box 250, 57551

Mission: (605) 856-4431
671 N. Marge Lane
PO Box 818, 57555

Mitchell: (605) 995-8000
116 E. 11th Ave., 57301

Mobridge: (605) 845-2922
920 6th St. W., PO Box 160, 57601

Olivet: (605) 387-4219
Courthouse, 140 Euclid,
Room 127, 57052

Pierre: (605) 773-3521
912 E. Sioux, 57501

Pine Ridge: (605) 867-5865
Planning Center Building
PO Box 279, 57770

Rapid City: (605) 355-3588
510 N. Cambell
PO Box 2440, 57709

Redfield: (605) 472-4220
Courthouse, 210 E. 7th Ave.,
57469

Sioux Falls: (605) 367-5400
811 E. 10th St., Dept. 4, 57103

Sisseton: (605) 698-7673
119 E. Cherry St.
PO Box 230, 57262

Sturgis: (605) 347-2588
2200 W. Main Street, 57785

Vermillion: (605) 677-6800
114 Market St., PO Box 516, 57069

Watertown: (605) 882-5003
2001 9th Ave. SW, Suite 300,
PO Box 670, 57201

Winner: (605) 842-0400
649 W. Second St., PO Box 31,
57580

Yankton: (605) 668-3030
3113 Spruce St., Suite 200, 57078

Department of Social Services Adult Services and Aging

**Toll-free 1-866-854-5465
or (605) 773-3656**



Visit Our Web Site at:
www.state.sd.us/social/asa

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Ombudsman Services

A Communication Bridge



Promoting the Highest Quality of Life

Department of Social Services
Adult Services and Aging